



Maricopa County

Parks & Recreation Department



234 N. Central Avenue
Suite 6400
Phoenix, AZ 85004-2187
Phone: (602) 506-2930
Fax: (602) 506-4692

Date: October 1, 2007
To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners
From: R. J. Cardin, Director
Subject: Director's Summary of Current Events

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the September Director's Summary.

Superintendent Report

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA): The Interpretive Ranger has conducted ten guided hikes and two private hikes this month. The Ranger has also completed the final installation of ironwood trees to recreate the bosque in a disturbed area north of the old ranch site.

Cave Creek Regional Park: Seven different programs were held this month including Hiking 101 and Critters of Cave Creek. The Cave Creek Trail Rides will be returning to the park on October 4th.

Interviews were held for the Cave Creek Interpretive Ranger position. Staff is also preparing for the October 6th "Unmark Your Park" program with approximately 75 volunteers assisting with clean up and Cave Creek Park and Adobe Dam.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: The Interpretive Ranger offered sixteen programs through the hot month of September. The Wind Cave regulars were happy to see her every Sunday morning for "Find the Ranger" on the Wind Cave Trail. The "Just for Kids" activity was the "Scaly Scavenger Hunt". Ranger Jenny's group of Senior Brisk Walkers on the Merkle Trail are keeping her in shape for the Sunrise Fitness Hikes which are producing several early morning hikers. The renovation of the Buckhorn Campground Nature Trail done by the Eagle Scouts is also bringing in more visitors for the nature walks.

The park is working with the Mountain Patrol Division of the Sheriff's Department to transfer their critters to Usery Park. The Ranger is receiving training from the Desert Outdoor Center staff in venomous animal handling and caretaking. The new critters are a Gila monster, Mojave rattlesnake and a gopher snake.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: The final night biking event was held on September 29th. Many of the September projects involved trail work to try to repair erosion and lessen the amount of sand on the trails. Community service workers have assisted in trimming vegetation on the trails and making them more passable.

Staff has been working to lay out the decking for the new wildlife viewing blind. They have also worked to ease the method of gaining access to the area. Fencing has been repaired by staff along the Rio Verde section that was torn down by debris that came down the running washes.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: The San Tan family continues to grow as more critters are popping in and around the visitor center. Two baby tortoises and a baby cottontail rabbit have been spotted and are thriving inside the tortoise habitat. Sonoran Desert Toads have decided to make their home near the visitor center entrance and are helping to control the insect populations around the area. The park is also home to a Gila monster, gopher and king snake thanks to a partnership with Arizona Game and Fish.

Despite the warm temperatures visitors are still participating in the park programs. A "Hiking with the Stars" program had 41 attendees. The "Wildlife Encounters at Night" program attracted over 100 visitors. The "Tortoise Talk" program was established to announce the names of the Desert Tortoises and to educate visitors about them. The winning names for the tortoises were Santana (mother) and Shelly (daughter).

Monsoon storms have caused damage to several areas in the trail system. Park staff is working to get them back in shape. The new trails are nearing completion.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: The Park Supervisor is currently on vacation and the September information will be available in the October report.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: Buoys have been changed in Scorpion Bay Marina from no-wake to no-entry. The 10-lane and 4-lane no-wake zones were moved farther out due to low water levels. We anticipate that Central Arizona Project will be releasing water soon.

Three public meetings have been completed for the Agua Fria area. Items of interest that came from each one are accessing Table Mesa, increase law enforcement and increase staffing in the area. Staff is researching the projected cost of building an entry station and staffing for a facility in the Agua Fria area.

The "Unmark Your Parks" project will be held on October 6th with approximately 600 volunteers expected to lend a helping hand in cleaning up the park. Another program coming up on November 3rd is a "Campground Cookout".

Desert Outdoor Center: DOC staff are currently reviewing classes in preparation for the "No Child Left Inside" initiative. Class reviews and development for curriculum content and meeting state standards is ongoing. Many school reservations are coming in for the school year.

The DOC hosted meetings in September with the Arizona State Parks Board, Friends of the DOC and two public meetings pertaining to the Agua Fria conservation area.

Marketing Update

Parks has agreed to co-edit the February issue of the APRA Magazine. If time permits, Parks will provide assistance on future issues.

Maricopa County's Flood Control District unveiled the El Rio Educational Research and Development Project to the public on Thursday, September 20th. Keynote speakers included:

- Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox, District 5;
- City of Goodyear Mayor James Cavanaugh;
- City of Avondale Councilmember Frank Scott;
- Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department Director R.J. Cardin; and
- Bureau of Reclamation Area Manager Carol Erwin

As a member of the West Valley Recreation committee, Parks has agreed to oversee website maintenance for the www.westvalleyrecreation.com site so the committee, which consists of west Valley cities, does not have to incur fees for a webmaster.

Valley Forward Environmental Excellence Awards were presented on Saturday, September 29th, Parks received two awards of Merit for the Programs with Purpose – Interpretive Programs and the Spur Cross Trail System.

Contract Updates

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: Excavation continues at Lake Pleasant for the new marina to include required blasting. On September 9th the Circuit Court denied Pensus' motion for a stay or injunction pending appeal. The Court also moved to expedite the hearing of the appeal which will now be heard in San Francisco on October 15th, 2007.

Hearings, as part of the MAG 208 permit being issued for the waste water treatment, began on September 17th and was approved by the Technical Advisory Committee. There are a total of three (3) meetings as part of the review process. The last meeting is scheduled for October 24th.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: The Board of Supervisors approved Amendment 1 to the Special Use Agreement between Parks and Arizona Model Aviators. The Amendment extended the term of their agreement until 2021 giving them the assurances needed to invest in needed improvements to the facility.

The Use Management Agreement was approved by the County with Verizon for placement of a cell site at Usery Mountain Regional Park. Parks Department will receive annual revenue in the amount of \$24,000 initially with an escalation clause.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

The following people recently left Parks; Gary Jambazian, Trails Technician with the Trails Crew and Ray Kaniut, Park Supervisor at Cave Creek. The following person has been hired at Parks; Fortina (Tina) Quintero, the new Park Office Assistant at Estrella; she started work on September 24th.

Parks is currently recruiting for the following; Trails Technician (2 positions) for the Trails Crew, Electrician for the Construction Crew, Park Supervisor for Cave Creek Park, and Temporary Park Maintenance Worker for the Desert Outdoor Center.

Interviews for the Interpretive Ranger positions at McDowell and Cave Creek were held on Tuesday, September 25th.